

# 2-7 Cav. conducts NET training to synchronize Bradley vehicle crews

**SGT. 1ST CLASS BRIAN SIPP**  
*4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs*

Troopers from the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment received their Bradley fighting vehicles for Christmas and, as a follow-up New Year's gift, began training with the New Equipment Testing unit on every phase of their new rides.

The Bradley NET Team, based in Fort Hood, Texas, began immersing the Long Knife Soldiers in every aspect of Bradley operations in what will end up as a 43-day certification program.

"We will take them from an introduction of the vehicle, to preventive maintenance checks and services, to loading and unloading the weapons systems, to eventually driving and firing during qualification during the Table VIII phase," explained Tony Orozco, Team Seven assistant lead

with the NET team. "We've got a three-to-one ratio of Soldiers to instructors; that's one instructor for every crew. We run 24-7 operations around the clock, and all of our Bradley instructors have extensive experience with the system and are fully-qualified on it," added Orozco.

Since the Army combined the 11B and 11M military occupational specialties, or dismounted and mounted infantry, the need for total immersion is essential in getting all the Bradley crews on the same page, said Staff Sgt. Brandon Dockery, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division master gunner.

"The formerly dismounted infantry have to learn a whole new mounted way of conducting operations, and vice-versa. It will make the infantryman more diverse in the future, but takes time and practice," Dockery added.



SGT. 1ST CLASS BRIAN SIPP

**Pfc. Edward Stow, a Bradley driver from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-7 Cavalry, uploads a TOW missile into the launcher. The timed process was completed in 23 seconds from start to finish.**

"A lot of these guys have never been on a Bradley before; this gives them full training, from start to finish," said Sgt. 1st Class Russell Borea, A Company, 2-7 Cav., 2nd platoon sergeant.

Dockery agreed, "This type of training gives the crew the individualized attention that they need; good hands-on training instead of just classroom instruction."

The NET teams consist of a major-

ity of former Bradley operators and are called in to train Soldiers every time that a unit fields new equipment or receives an upgrade to existing equipment, according to Orozco. They are contracted to remain at Fort Bliss for a period of six months.

"As one 43-day class ends, we start another, and another company rotates through. Our end state is getting the entire 4th BCT qualified and proficient on their vehicles," he concluded.

## 'Longknife' brigade village set for May completion

**SGT. PAULA TAYLOR**  
*4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs*

When many Soldiers change duty stations, their new workplace usually comes with a desk, phone lines and Internet capability. There is also usually a person being replaced who trains the Soldier and ensures they are properly integrated into an office that has been established for years.

But for Soldiers of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, that is far from what happened when they arrived here last summer. Fortunately, they are flexible enough to adapt and have progressed a long way since their arrival and activation in October.

Housing for the cavalry troops was addressed by Fort Bliss officials as early as summer 2004. To house the troops, Fort Bliss had to re-designate the Aero Vista housing area on Biggs Army Airfield, said Sgt. Maj. Lisa Hunter, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy public affairs chief. This re-designation meant the sergeants major who were occupying that area had to be relocated.

"We are still in a temporary solution as far as facilities," said Command Sgt. Maj. Stephan Frennier, 4-1's Bde. command sergeant major. "That will change with the completion of our village in phases. Phase I is due to be complete 21 February."

Phase I consists of barracks space for 500 troops, brigade headquarters buildings and battalion and company-level office areas. Phases II and III will include additional office space, five motor pools and the remainder of the barracks. The project is scheduled to be completed in May, said Brad Hartell, resident engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort

Worth District. "The current state of the brigade is that we are approximately 70 percent up on manpower," said Frennier.

By the end of this week they will have 2,600 Soldiers assigned to the BCT. Frennier expects to be fully manned and 95 percent equipped by May.

"We should be fully manned and fully equipped with the exception of a few high-technology items that may come a little later, and we understand that because the priority is the war," said Frennier. "We have begun small-arms training. The end result after next week will be that everyone that has arrived here up until a week ago will be fully qualified with their personally assigned weapon."

"It's very challenging for them right now," he added. "Up until a couple of months ago, it was real tough for them. We didn't even have small arms to start the qualification and weapons handling. It's getting better now."

Frennier said the brigade will ensure the troops are ready to deploy by training them.

"It all starts with basic rifle marksmanship," he said. "That's our top priority and will remain our top priority. Knowing who can shoot well and who needs more work is something the leadership is looking at."

The unit has also received its initial set of Bradley fighting vehicles and is expecting its first tanks to arrive next month, said Frennier.

"The equipment has arrived when it was scheduled to arrive," he said. "We started NET training last week with our first unit, the 2-7 Cav. That's a continuous process that will go on for the next several months."



**Lt. Col. Eric Welsh, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment commander, is escorted by Brad Hartell, resident engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, through the 4th BCT's new facility complex.**

Newly arriving troops can expect to be integrated into a team that has recently arrived whether it was last June or whether it was last week, said Frennier.

"They can expect to become a member of that team very quickly," he said. "This unit is very unique because we're standing up a unit from newcomers whether they are straight out of training or whether they PCSed from other duty stations."

Frennier recognizes the frustration some of the troops feel, but says the end result once they are a fully trained heavy brigade combat team is that they will be able to look back and say "I did that."

"I think their frustration level is starting to subside a little bit but it's still there," said Frennier. "Once we get settled into our own facility and we're fully equipped, our NCOs will look back and say it was tough, but it was pretty good," he said.

Frennier appreciates what the Soldiers have done in the brigade to this point and recognizes their work has been tremendous.

"A few months ago, there was no one here; now we have 2,600 Soldiers in this brigade," said Frennier. "I'm very proud of what they have accomplished so far and what they will accomplish in the near future and not-so-distant future."



PHOTOS BY SGT. PAULA TAYLOR

**Construction of new housing for troops continues at Biggs Army Airfield.**





DAVID L. WISE

**Corps of Engineers  
project site visit at Biggs**

Jan. 8, Gen. Richard Cody, vice chief of staff, U.S. Army visited the Corps of Engineers construction project on Biggs Army Airfield and inspected the site of temporary modular facilities being utilized by the 4th BCT, 1st Cav. on East Biggs. Pictured from left to right: Lt. Col. John Kirby, Fort Bliss range commander, Brad Hartell and Steve Freymuth, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Coagland Creech, Clark Construction, Brig. Gen. Robert P. Lennox, post commander, Ken Duty, Clark Construction, and Col. Robert Burns, garrison commander.

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# FW District partners to take on \$2 billion Bliss construction project

**EDWARD RIVERA**  
*Fort Worth District Public Affairs*

FORT WORTH, Texas – “If you build it, he will come,” says the voice in the movie *Field of Dreams*. The Fort Worth District hears a different voice, whispering, “They are coming, so you better build it, and build it fast.”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is not talking about a baseball field for the ghosts of 18 ballplayers. They’re talking about what would amount to a small city for approximately 19,000 Soldiers, returning from overseas installations to Fort Bliss.

“My mission is to provide quality facilities for Soldiers coming to Fort Bliss from various locations within a specific timeframe,” said Col. John R.



**Lisa C. Billman, right, Fort Worth District contract specialist, distributes information to several small business representatives during a networking opportunity at Industry Day, Jan. 18, at the El Paso Community College.**

Minahan, commander, Fort Worth District.

As part of the Army’s transformation, a division headquarters, four brigade combat teams and a combat aviation brigade will make Fort Bliss their home. According to Robert P. Morris, Jr., Base Realignment and Closure program manager for the Fort Worth District, this influx brings a need for headquarters and administrative space, dining facilities, aircraft hangars, arms rooms, unit storage facilities and barracks for approximately 19,000 Soldiers.

“We’re going to be basically building another city at Biggs (Army Airfield). More than \$2 billion in construction projects have been programmed for Fort Bliss,” said Minahan to more than 600 business owners at an Industry Day, Jan. 18, at the El Paso Community College, Valle Verde Campus. “We need the help of businesses in the transformation of the Army that is taking place.”

This tremendous transformation project is being undertaken while the Army is still at war. Not only must the corps build for the new brigade combat team footprint, but, it must also accept and meet the challenges set for it, by the Army, to meet their cost and schedule requirements.

“The business community’s support is essential in helping the Corps of Engineers meet the challenge of building the improvements on schedule and on cost,” said Minahan.

But, the business community is not



PHOTOS BY EDWARD RIVERA

**Col. John R. Minahan, commander, Fort Worth District, welcomes more than 600 business representatives to the Corps of Engineers-sponsored Industry Day, Jan. 18, at the El Paso Community College.**

the only source from which the Fort Worth District will get help. Five other corps districts will join forces with Fort Worth in a new Product Line Support approach to accomplish the mission. According to Morris, rather than hire a large number of new employees to handle this increased workload, the Fort Worth District is taking a regional approach to the work.

“Fort Worth is partnering with districts in Sacramento, Calif., Albuquerque, N.M., Tulsa, Okla., Little Rock, Ark., and Galveston, Texas. Each district is responsible for a particular product line and will handle the facilities in that product line from ‘cradle to grave,’” said Morris.

Fort Worth will be responsible for infrastructure, barracks, and training ranges in addition to providing a central point of contact and coordinating the activities of the other Product Line Districts.

The Product Line District responsibilities: Albuquerque, company operations facilities; Galveston, ammunition storage facilities and parking facilities; Little Rock, dining facilities and aircraft hangars; Sacramento, brigade and battalion headquarters

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buildings and unit storage facilities; and Tulsa, maintenance facilities.

“Besides sharing the workload, this approach also builds expertise levels which should result in time savings and institutionalizing lessons learned,” said Morris.

With the historic groundbreaking in the near future, the Fort Worth District has also broken ground on another new approach to managing projects of this magnitude. Morris explains, with most of the units going into new construction in an undeveloped portion of Biggs Army Airfield, the district is using a Land Development Engineer approach.

“The LDE brings large-scale development experience to the corps and will be valuable, especially in the infrastructure planning and coordination of facilities construction,” said Morris.

New ideas, new directions and new partnerships will be the cornerstone of the military construction on Fort Bliss. The partnering between corps districts and the desire of the corps to engage the small business community, in El Paso and beyond, will usher in a new era of teamwork for the nation and the Soldiers supporting their country.

During the Industry Day, Rep.



Paul Stone, left, Procurement Center representative, Small Business Administration, Fort Worth, Texas, talks to small business representatives during a networking opportunity at Industry Day, Jan. 18, at El Paso Community College.

Silvestre Reyes, D-El Paso, made it clear to the Corps of Engineers that the small businesses and others in the El Paso business community and abroad would be supportive, “and show that El Paso is 100 percent behind the Army.”



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